

EXHIBIT A

**THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI
EASTERN DIVISION**

JOHN BARNHARDT, ET AL.

PLAINTIFFS

and

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

PLAINTIFF-INTERVENOR

v.

CIVIL ACTION NO. 4:65-cv-1300-HTW-LGI

**MERIDIAN MUNICIPAL SEPARATE
SCHOOL DISTRICT, ET AL.**

DEFENDANTS

PROPOSED ORDER APPROVING SETTLEMENT PURSUANT TO FED R. CIV. P. 23(E)

The Private Plaintiffs John Barnhardt, et al. and Defendants Meridian Public School District, et al. have jointly moved the Court for final approval of their proposed Settlement Agreement that would terminate this desegregation action. The Settlement Agreement and supporting materials have been submitted to the Court. [ECF 158]. This Court granted preliminary approval of the Settlement Agreement and authorized the setting and procedures for the unitary status hearing, for publication of notice of a hearing, and for public objection and comment. [ECF 202]. On September 12, 2023, this Court held a fairness hearing on the Settlement Agreement.

The Court, having considered the Settlement Agreement, public comments submitted before the fairness hearing, and testimony and exhibits offered during the fairness hearing, finds the Settlement Agreement should be approved.

The Court ORDERS that the SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT is APPROVED.

SO ORDERED, this ___ day of September, 2023.

Honorable Henry T. Wingate
UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT JUDGE

Agreed to by:

Counsel for Private Plaintiffs:

/s/ John Cusick

John Cusick
NAACP Legal Defense Fund
40 Rector Street, 5th Floor
New York, NY 10006-1738
Telephone: 212-965-2200
Facsimile: 212-226-7592

/s/ Fred L. Banks, Jr.

Fred L. Banks, Jr.
Phelps Dunbar LLP
Mississippi State Bar No. 1733
4270 I-55 North
Jackson, MS 39211-6391
Tel: (601) 360-935
Fax: (601) 360-9777
fred.banks@phelps.com

Counsel for Defendant Meridian Public School District:

/s/ John S. Hooks

John S. Hooks
MS Bar No. 99175
Adams and Reese LLP
1018 Highland Colony Pkwy., Suite 800
Ridgeland, MS 39157
Tel: (601) 353-3234
Fax: (601)-355-9708
John.Hooks@arlaw.com

And

/s/ John G. Compton

John G. Compton
MS Bar No. 6433
Witherspoon & Compton
1100 23rd Avenue
P. O. Box 845
Meridian, Mississippi 39302
Tel: (601) 693-6466
Fax: (601) 693-4840
jcompton@witherspooncompton.com